

California Massage License Requirements

In 2008, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed bill SB 731. Prior to this bill's existence, California massage therapists obtained certification through the city or county in which they wanted to practice. Each city and county had its own unique requirements, and if a practicing massage therapist moved elsewhere, he had to get an entirely new certification. As of September 1, 2009, state certification is required, and statewide standards are in place, if you wish to work as a certified massage therapist in California.

Certified Massage Practitioner Requirements

A Certified Massage Practitioner (CMP) is someone who is on her way to becoming a Certified Massage Therapist (CMT). To become a CMP in the state of California, you must meet one of the following five requirements.

Requirement 1. You must have completed 250 hours at an approved massage school.

Requirement 2. You have a previous valid permit or license from a California city or county, 100 hours of education, and three years in practice with at least 1,000 hours of massage work.

Requirement 3. You have 100 hours of education and have been in three years of practice with at least 1,750 hours of massage work.

Requirement 4. You are an approved massage teacher at a recognized massage therapy school, or a massage teacher at a school accredited by an agency recognized by the US Department of Education, or a massage teacher at a California state college or university.

Requirement 5. You have a "conditional certificate," which will be available until January 1, 2012, for those who have more than 100 but less than 250 education hours, and who have not yet met the minimum number of practice hours. The CMP is required to complete at least 30 education hours a year, until he meets the 250-hour education requirement.

As of December 31, 2015, these qualifications will cease to exist, and all CMPs must meet the criteria for being a CMT.

Certified Massage Therapist Requirements

A practitioner who is a Certified Massage Therapist (CMT) has exceeded the standards for being a CMP. In 2016, all massage therapists in California must be CMTs in order to meet California standards. The standards to be a CMT in California are as follows.

1. You must have 500 hours of massage therapy school, of which 250 must be from an accredited school.
2. You must have passed either the MBLEx or the NCETMB/NCETM.
3. You must have at least two years of documented work experience.
4. You must have a current license or certification from a U.S. state or Canadian province with requirements that are equal or greater than the requirements in California.

Additional Requirements

California state law also requires that applicants for massage certification go through a criminal background check via Live Scan. The cost of this varies on the Live Scan site. But, the usual cost is between \$20 and \$50. In addition, the initial application fee is \$150, plus an additional \$125 to renew the license every two years.